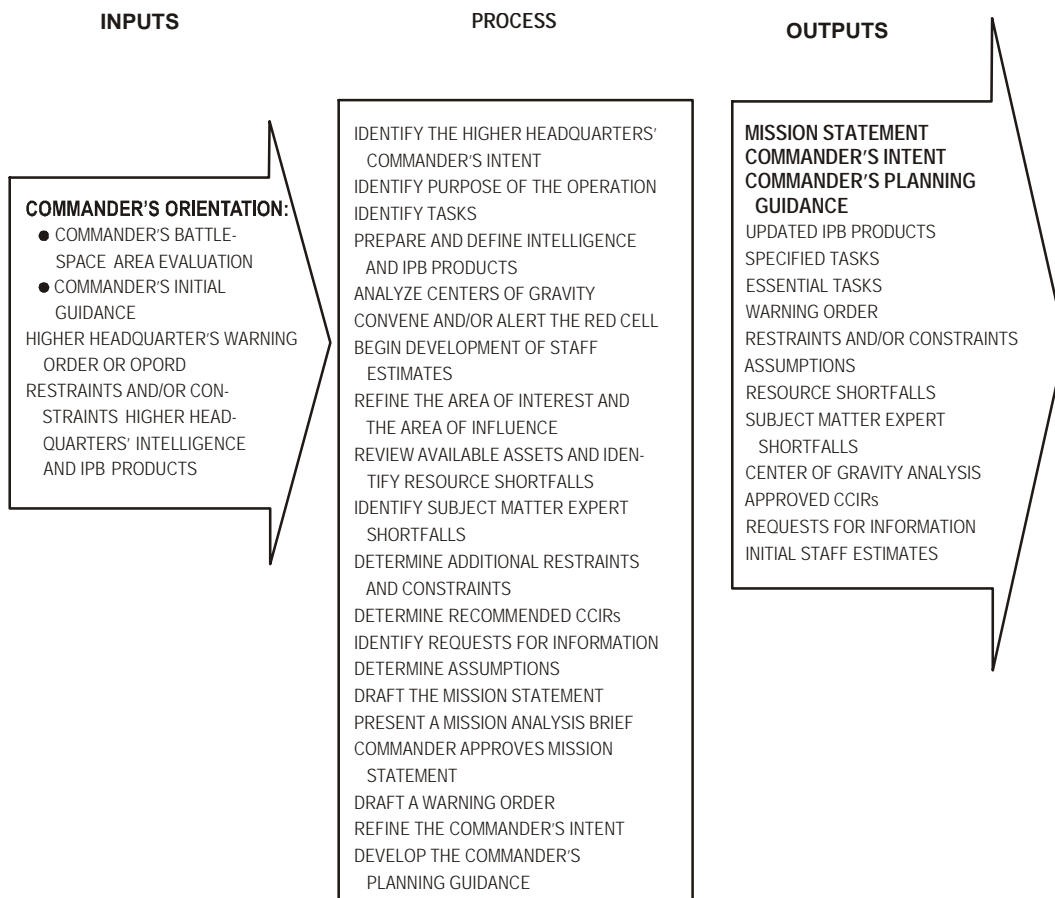


## Chapter 2

# Mission Analysis

*“There are two parts to any mission: the task to be accomplished and the reason . . . . The task describes the action to be taken while the intent describes the desired result of the action.”<sup>2</sup>*

—MCDP 6, *Command and Control*



**BOLD TEXT INDICATES MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**

Mission analysis is the first step in planning. Its purpose is to review and analyze orders, guidance, and other information that is provided by higher headquarters in order to produce a unit mission statement. Mission analysis drives the remainder of the Marine Corps Planning Process.

The keys to successful mission analysis are preparation, professional competence, and the identification of the operation's purpose and all its essential tasks. A thorough mission analysis focuses the efforts of the commander and the staff, thereby saving time. The staff should be well

organized, prepared to plan as required, and begin development of staff estimates during mission analysis. To plan effectively, planners should have access to all documents relative to the mission, area of operations, etc. (e.g., standing operating procedures, operation plans).

Before the commander and the staff can begin mission analysis, they must develop an understanding of their potential employment. Their understanding must include the possible area of operations; probable mission; available forces; and political, military, and cultural characteristics of the area. They can gain this understanding from national-level intelligence products, other military and governmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, academia (military war colleges, developmental centers, etc.), businesses, and their innate knowledge. If operations are already underway, the commander and the staff will require less time and information to gain understanding and situational awareness.

## 2001. Inputs

Each step in the Marine Corps Planning Process begins with inputs. Inputs may derive from higher headquarters, the commander or staff, or outputs from previous steps. Inputs to mission analysis include, but are not limited to, the commander's orientation, higher headquarters' warning order or operation order, restraints and/or constraints, and higher headquarters' intelligence and intelligence preparation of the battlespace (IPB) products.

### a. Commander's Orientation

Initially, the commander's orientation is based on a preliminary analysis of available information. The commander's initial information may only be the purpose of the operation as assigned by higher headquarters, or it might include—

- Higher headquarters' plans, orders, and estimates, including IPB products.
- Force availability and suitability.

- Personal reconnaissance results.
- Intelligence preparation of the battlespace products and other input from the staff.

As more information becomes available, such as a higher headquarters order (including the mission and intent of the higher headquarters [two levels up] and the missions of supporting, supported, and adjacent commands), the commander conducts his preliminary analysis of the mission (or potential mission). The commander may conduct his analysis using mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available-time available (METT-T). He must also consider the ability of his command—personnel, materiel, and morale—to accomplish the mission.

Once the commander completes his preliminary analysis, he issues his commander's orientation. The commander's orientation includes the commander's battlespace area evaluation (CBAE) and initial guidance. Ideally, the commander personally issues his guidance to subordinate commanders and principal staff. The commander's orientation helps shape the remainder of the planning process.

**(1) Commander's Battlespace Area Evaluation.** The commander's battlespace area evaluation is the commander's personal vision based on his understanding of the mission, the battlespace, and the enemy. The commander uses this evaluation to develop, assess, and communicate knowledge to the staff. This knowledge supports the planning and decisionmaking processes. The CBAE may be as simple as the commander's initial thoughts or it may be as complex as the product of his detailed analysis. It identifies the battlespace, centers of gravity, commander's intent, and commander's critical information requirements.

**(a) Commander's Battlespace.** The commander's battlespace consists of his area of operations, the area of influence, and the area of interest. The commander uses the information he receives to create his initial view of the

battlespace. The commander passes his initial view of the battlespace to his planners for use throughout the remainder of the planning process.

The commander is normally assigned an area of operations. He considers his mission, forces, inherent warfighting functions requirements, and area of operations (assigned or proposed) to determine an area of influence. The commander compares his area of operations against the area of influence to determine if its size and location allow him to accomplish his mission. If, during the comparison process, the commander determines that the area of operations is too large, too small, or not located appropriately, he informs his superior commander.

The commander uses all the information discussed above to define his area of interest. An area of interest includes all the factors (e.g., enemy forces and capabilities, host nation support, flow of forces and supply, sustainment, command relationships, boundaries, fire support coordinating measures) that may influence the commander's operations. His area of interest also encompasses the area of influence and area of operations.

**(b) Center of Gravity.** MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, defines a center of gravity (COG) as any important source of strength. It may be mental, moral, or physical strength, power, or will. Centers of gravity may exist at each level of war: strategic, operational, and tactical. It may be tangible or intangible, and there may be multiple centers of gravity.

The concept of centers of gravity applies equally to both threat and friendly forces. At the tactical level, the enemy's center of gravity is normally an enemy unit. At the operational level, an enemy's center of gravity may also be a threat capability; e.g., the ability to mass fires or conduct resupply. Friendly centers of gravity are the strengths that the commander uses to attack enemy weaknesses and to protect his forces from enemy attack.

Subordinate commanders and staff personnel may assist the commander in the identification of centers of gravity. The G-2/S-2 may be particularly helpful in identifying enemy centers of gravity. If the commander is unable to identify enemy centers of gravity, he may substitute enemy strengths. The commander provides the staff with initial enemy centers of gravity so they can begin to identify possible shaping and decisive actions.

**(c) Commander's Intent.** Commander's intent is the commander's personal expression of the purpose of the operation. It must be clear, concise, and easily understood. It may also include how the commander envisions achieving a decision as well as the endstate or conditions that, when satisfied, accomplish the purpose.

Commander's intent helps subordinates understand the larger context of their actions and guides them in the absence of orders. It allows subordinates to exercise judgment and initiative—in a way that is consistent with the higher commander's aims—when the unforeseen occurs. This freedom of action, within the broad guidance of the commander's intent, creates tempo during planning and execution. Higher and subordinate commanders' intents must be aligned. The purpose of the operation may be derived from the "in order to . . ." portion of the mission statement or the execution paragraph of the higher commander's operation plan or operation order.

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During commander's orientation, the commander may only know the purpose of the operation as assigned by his higher headquarters. As the commander proceeds through the planning process, he gains additional insight on METT-T. As a result, the commander may refine his intent to include how he plans to achieve a decision and reach the endstate that accomplishes the purpose of the operation.

**(d) Commander's Critical Information Requirements.** The commander's critical information requirements (CCIRs) identify information on friendly activities, enemy activities, and the environment that the commander deems critical to maintaining situational awareness, planning future activities, and assisting in timely and informed decisionmaking. The commander's critical information requirements focus the commander's staff and subordinate commanders planning and collection efforts. They help the commander tailor the command and control organization. The commanders critical information requirements are central to effective information management, which directs the processing, flow, and use of information throughout the force. While the staff can recommend CCIRs, only the commander can approve them.

**(2) Commander's Initial Guidance.** The commander develops his initial guidance using his commander's battlespace area evaluation, his experience, and the mission information available from higher headquarters. The commander's initial guidance provides the staff and subordinate commanders with additional insight on how the commander views the mission. Depending on the time available, the commander may provide general guidance and specific points he wants the staff and subordinate commanders to consider (a particular enemy capability, a certain task organization, etc.).

### **b. Higher Headquarters' Warning Order or Operation Order**

A verbal or written order from a higher headquarters provides important information used in mission analysis. The higher headquarters' planning products, such as operation plans, operation orders, and contingency plans provide input throughout the Marine Corps Planning Process. If higher headquarters' orders or guidance is unclear, the commander or the staff should immediately seek clarification. Liaison officers and higher headquarters planning representatives (e.g., G-5 liaison cell at joint force headquarters)

who are familiar with the plan can provide valuable information and should actively participate in the planning process.

### **c. Restraints and/or Constraints**

Restraints are things a command prohibits its subordinates from doing. For example, do not damage religious shrines, archeological sites, or civilian schools. Constraints are things that may limit a commander's freedom of action. For example, avoid damaging adjacent civilian buildings, use only precision-guided munitions to destroy key targets in the city. Restraints and constraints are included in the rules of engagement, commander's guidance, or instructions from higher headquarters. Simply put, restraints are things the commander cannot do; constraints are the things he must do.

### **d. Higher Headquarters' Intelligence and Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace Products**

Higher headquarters' intelligence products and the commander's IPB products are critical inputs to mission analysis. These products are the basis of the commander's IPB process and are updated and used throughout the operation. Higher headquarters' intelligence products include their IPB products, intelligence estimates, intelligence summaries, and Annex B, Intelligence, of the operation order. Intelligence preparation of the battlespace products that the commander receives from higher headquarters and the intelligence staff may include the modified, combined obstacle overlay and threat situation templates. See appendix D for more information on IPB products.

## **2002. Process**

Once planners understand higher headquarters commander's orders and intent and their own commander's battlespace area evaluation and initial guidance, they identify specified, implied, and essential tasks. Essential tasks are the foundation

of the mission statement because they define mission success. After evaluating the battlespace, commander's intent, available assets, restraints and/or constraints, assumptions, risks, initial CCIRs, ongoing intelligence operations, and the initial timeline, planners draft a mission statement. Planners list specified and implied tasks, assumptions, resource and subject matter expert shortfalls, restraints and/or constraints, and information requirements to help them identify essential tasks and develop the mission statement.

Planners present mission analysis results to the commander and the staff to ensure that the mission statement and identified essential tasks facilitate development of a COA that will accomplish the mission. After the mission analysis brief, the commander approves or modifies the proposed mission statement.

#### **a. Identify the Higher Headquarters' Commander's Intent**

The higher headquarters' operation order (OPORD) or fragmentary order (FRAGO) contains the higher commander's intent.

#### **b. Identify Purpose of the Operation**

The purpose of the operation may be found in the commander's intent (provided in the commander's orientation). If not specifically stated, the operation's purpose may be derived from the higher commander's intent or assigned missions or tasks. A clear understanding of the purpose of the operation is essential for maintaining tempo in both planning and execution.

#### **c. Identify Tasks**

Using the information provided in the commander's orientation and higher headquarters' orders, the staff identifies specified and implied tasks. Of these, tasks that define mission success and may be applicable to the force as a whole are further identified as essential tasks. Approved taskings may become the basis for subparagraph 3c of the 5-paragraph OPLAN or OPORD.

**(1) Specified Tasks.** Specified tasks are specifically assigned to a unit by its higher headquarters. Specified tasks are derived primarily from the execution paragraphs of the higher headquarters operation order, but they may be found elsewhere, such as in the mission statement, coordinating instructions, or annexes. Any specified task that pertains to any element of the unit should be identified and recorded.

**(2) Implied Tasks.** Implied tasks may not be specifically stated in the higher headquarters' order, but they are performed to accomplish specified tasks. Implied tasks emerge from analysis of the higher headquarters' order, the threat, and the terrain. Routine, inherent, or standing operating procedure tasks are not included in the list of tasks.

**(3) Essential Tasks.** Essential tasks are specified or implied tasks that define mission success and apply to the force as a whole. If a task must be successfully completed for the commander to accomplish his purpose, it is an essential task. The mission statement is derived from the essential tasks.

#### **d. Prepare and Refine Intelligence and Intelligence Preparation of the Battlespace Products**

Higher headquarters' intelligence and IPB products are reviewed and refined by the staff. New intelligence and IPB products, to include enemy COAs, are prepared by the staff to support centers of gravity and mission analysis.

#### **e. Analyze Centers of Gravity**

The staff conducts a more detailed center of gravity analysis based on the CBAE to identify or refine threat and friendly centers of gravity and to determine which friendly and threat weaknesses are critical vulnerabilities. A critical vulnerability is something that a force needs to function effectively and is, or can be made, vulnerable to attack. Critical vulnerabilities provide an aiming point for the application of friendly strengths

against threat weaknesses. The staff identifies and directs the force's strengths against the enemy's critical vulnerabilities in order to hamper his ability to function; to defend, attack, or sustain his forces; or to command his forces. Once identified, critical vulnerabilities assist the commander in choosing where, when, and what will constitute decisive action. By attacking critical vulnerabilities, the commander increases the potential that the attack may in fact be a decisive action. The staff also identifies friendly critical vulnerabilities in order to protect friendly centers of gravity from enemy attack.

#### **f. Convene and/or Alert the Red Cell**

A red cell assists the commander in assessing COAs against a thinking enemy. It develops likely enemy COAs and portrays a doctrinally-correct enemy during wargaming. A red cell can range in size from an intelligence officer to a task-organized group of subject matter experts. A red cell refines the threat COAs that will be used during COA and wargaming, develops planning support tools such as the synchronization matrix, and may also participate in the analysis of enemy centers of gravity. See appendix E for more information on the red cell.

#### **g. Begin Development of Staff Estimates**

The staff begins to gather information that will be refined throughout the planning process and continuously develops and refines staff estimates. A staff estimate provides a logical and orderly examination of all factors that affect mission accomplishment. It provides the commander and the staff with necessary information that supports decisionmaking throughout the planning process and subsequent execution of the operation. Depending on the level of command and the time available, the staff estimate could be as formal as a detailed written document or as informal as an oral briefing. See appendix F for more information on formal staff estimates.

#### **h. Refine the Area of Interest and Area of Influence**

The staff refines the area of interest and area of influence, which are identified in the CBAE, based on the current terrain analysis and current analysis of friendly and threat centers of gravity, capabilities, and limitations. The size of the area of interest may change based on the commander's understanding of the situation. Refining the area of interest may generate requests for information. The extent of the area of influence may change if forces are added or deleted, equipment capability and availability change, or rules of engagement change.

#### **i. Review Available Assets and Identify Resource Shortfalls**

As mission analysis is conducted, resource or capability shortfalls are noted. The commander and staff identify critical shortfalls and request support from higher headquarters.

#### **j. Identify Subject Matter Expert Shortfalls**

Based on the activities anticipated during an operation, planners determine what specialized planning or other expertise may be required. If this expertise is not readily available, the commander should request augmentation.

#### **k. Determine Additional Restraints and Constraints**

Additional restraints and constraints may be identified as a result of mission analysis. If additional restraints and constraints are identified, they are recorded and carried forward for use in subsequent planning.

#### **l. Determine Commander's Recommended Critical Information Requirements**

Only the commander decides what information is critical, but the staff may propose CCIRs to the commander. Commander's critical information

requirements are continually reviewed and updated or deleted as required.

### **m. Identify Requests for Information**

Planners identify if additional information is required to support future plans or to conduct current operations. Based on the initial IPB and information requirements (including CCIRs), the commander and staff identify gaps in the available information and intelligence. As requests for information are identified, they are forwarded to the appropriate staff section for action or to higher headquarters for answers.

### **n. Determine Assumptions**

Assumptions are suppositions about the current situation or about future events that are assumed to be true in the absence of facts. They are made for both friendly and threat situations. Assumptions should only be used when necessary to allow the commander to make a decision concerning the COA. A valid assumption should answer all of the following questions:

- Is it logical?
- Is it realistic?
- Is it essential for planning to continue?
- Does it avoid assuming away a threat capability?

As planning continues, additional assumptions may be needed and previous assumptions may be deleted as the operation changes. A record is kept of assumptions in order to track and validate them as they are confirmed or disapproved. Assumptions are contained in operation plans, but are not included in operation orders. If the operation plan contains assumptions that are not validated before execution, the assumptions become part of the inherent risk of the operation.

If possible, assumptions are forwarded to higher headquarters for validation. This ensures that the higher headquarters commander understands the potential risks that a subordinate command is ac-

cepting. It may prompt the higher headquarters to pursue facts that support the assumption or to request additional information.

### **o. Draft the Mission Statement**

The purpose of the operation and the essential tasks are the foundation for mission statement development. Planners should determine if the purpose of the operation and essential tasks are still valid before they draft the mission statement. A properly constructed mission statement answers the following questions:

- **Who?** (the forces that will conduct the operation)
- **What?** (the type of operation)
- **When?** (the time the operation will start and end)
- **Where?** (the location of the area of operation)
- **Why?** (the purpose of the operation)

Who, what, when, and where are derived from the essential tasks. Why is derived from the purpose of the operation.

### **p. Present a Mission Analysis Brief**

The staff presents a mission analysis brief to the commander to obtain approval of the mission statement. The mission analysis brief reviews the products of mission analysis. The mission analysis brief may be as simple as a proposed mission statement, or it may include the following:

- Situation update (battlespace organization, area of operations, area of interest, area of influence).
- Intelligence estimate and IPB products (terrain analysis, weather analysis, threat integration [possible COAs]).
- Higher headquarters' mission.
- Higher headquarters' commander's intent (two levels up).
- Commander's intent.
- Commander's initial guidance.

- Review of purpose and tasks (specified, implied, essential).
- Review of assumptions.
- Review of restraints and/or constraints.
- Review of shortfalls (resources, subject matter experts).
- Center of gravity analysis (friendly, enemy).
- Requests for information.
- Recommended CCIRs.
- Proposed mission statement.

### q. Commander Approves Mission Statement

Once the commander receives the mission analysis brief, he may approve or modify the proposed mission statement or develop a new mission statement. He also approves all mission analysis products. Once the mission statement is approved, it remains valid unless a significant change occurs. The approved mission statement becomes paragraph 2 of the 5-paragraph operation plan or operation order.

### r. Draft a Warning Order

Once the commander approves or modifies the results of mission analysis, the staff may draft and issue a warning order to subordinate units. The warning order should include the approved mission statement (to include the commander's intent), the commander's guidance and any other information that will assist subordinate units with their planning (e.g., changes in task organization, earliest time of movement).

### s. Refine the Commander's Intent

After reviewing the mission analysis briefing and the mission statement, the commander may consider making refinements to his previously issued commander's intent.

### t. Develop the Commander's Planning Guidance

The commander's planning guidance focuses the staff during COA development. It should be specific enough to assist the planning effort, but not

so specific as to inhibit COA development. This guidance may be expressed in terms of warfighting functions, types of operations, forms of maneuver, etc.

Types of Operations	
Offense	MOOTW
Movement to Contact	Combating Terrorism
Attack	Counter Drug Operations
Exploitation	Humanitarian Assistance
Pursuit	NEO
	Strikes and Raids
Defense	
Mobile Defense	
Position Defense	
Forms of Maneuver	
Frontal Attack	
Penetration	
Flank Attack	
Envelopment	
Turning Movement	
Infiltration	

Planning guidance should include the commander's vision of decisive and shaping actions, which assists the staff in determining the main effort, phases of the operation, location of critical events, and other aspects of the operation the commander deems pertinent to COA development. Guidance may include (but is not limited to)—

- Threat vulnerabilities.
- Risk.
- Any further restraints and/or constraints.
- Decisive and shaping actions.
- Selection and employment of the main effort.
- Types of operations.
- Forms of maneuver.
- Command relationships.
- Task organization.
- Arrangement of the operation (phasing).
- Timing of the operations.



- Reserve.
- Evaluation of the battlespace.
- Mobility and countermobility.

**(1) Decisive Actions.** The purpose of any military operation is mission success. Decisive actions achieve mission success with the least loss of time, equipment, and, most importantly, lives. They cause a favorable change in the situation or cause the threat to change or to cease planned and current activities. For an action to be truly decisive, it must result in an action that is larger than itself. Decisive actions create an environment in which the enemy has either lost the physical capability or the will to resist. The unit conducting the decisive action is normally identified as the main effort.

**(2) Shaping Actions.** Shaping sets conditions for decisive actions. Shaping actions are activities conducted throughout the battlespace to influence a threat capability or force, or the enemy's decisionmaking process. The commander shapes the battlespace by protecting friendly critical vulnerabilities and attacking enemy critical vulnerabilities. Shaping incorporates a wide array of functions and capabilities and is more than just fires and targeting. It may include direct attack, psychological operations, electronic warfare, deception, civil affairs, information management, public affairs, engineer operations, and preventive medical services. Logistic operations (e.g., the stockpiling of critical ammunition, fuel, and supplies to facilitate future operations) shape both friendly and threat forces.

Shaping makes the enemy vulnerable to attack, impedes or diverts his attempts to maneuver, aids

friendly maneuver, and dictates the time and place for decisive actions. It forces the enemy to adopt courses of action favorable to the commander's plans. The commander attempts to shape events in a way that allows him several options, so that by the time the moment for decisive action arrives, he is not restricted to only one course of action.

## 2003. Outputs

Mission analysis activities produce outputs that are vital inputs to subsequent steps in the Marine Corps Planning Process. The required outputs are the mission statement, commander's intent, and commander's planning guidance. Additional outputs may include—

- Updated IPB products.
- Specified tasks.
- Implied tasks.
- Essential tasks.
- Warning order.
- Restraints and/or constraints.
- Assumptions.
- Resource shortfalls.
- Subject matter experts shortfalls.
- Center of gravity analysis (friendly and enemy).
- Approved CCIRs.
- Requests for information.
- Initial staff estimates.

All outputs should be retained and refined as necessary throughout the planning process.